595 away from his village on military service. Buchanan, as late as 1807, reports that Nayar women vied with each other as to the number of lovers they could obtain. (p. 411).

595 [76] Until late in the nineteenth century, women
584 evidently had freedom to choose their own lovers.
644 This was until recently still the case in the royal lineages, where women selected their lovers from a small group of aristocratic Nambudiri families. Young men of these families were introduced into the palaces by older kinsmen already established there, and might become ensconced as regular occupants of the Nambudiri quarters until such time as they were dismissed by their royal mistresses. The princes of the lineage appear to have had little say in arranging these unions. I was told by one informant that the senior Raja periodically held an audience at which Nambudiris currently living in the palace were presented to him by his secretaries, but that otherwise he had little knowledge of
595 marital life within the palace. Today, as also
584 in commoner lineages, this is no longer the case: monogamy has been customary in all subcastes for the past forty to fifty years, and the prospective husband of a woman is selected by her karanavan or elder brother. In orthodox families of the retainer subcastes, at least for the past fifty years, the karanavan or the elder brother of a woman has had the right to dismiss a husband of whom he disapproved. Alternatively
[586] a woman may still, as of old, divorce her husband at will by refusing him admittance or causing her kinsmen to place his sleeping mat

584 outside on the verandah before he comes to visit
595 her.

These statements however again require some modification in the case of hypergamous unions. In recent years at all events, a powerful Nambudiri or royal landowner might occasionally force his attentions on a Nayar woman, whose family would be unlikely to oppose him. In two cases I even heard of Nambudiris who had succeeded in carrying on a liaison with a dead Nayar wife's younger sister, though this is contrary to Nayar rules of mating and led to unhappiness and strong covert [77] disapproval among the woman's kinsmen. In general, however, the traditional picture of Nayar marriage is one in which women voluntarily seek the favours of men: rape, for example, is a crime
[684] apparently unheard of among them. Certainly, cases are recorded of the dismissal of a higher caste man by a Nayar woman.

613 Combined polyandrous and polygynous mating
595 had a function in maintaining the unity of the
572 lineage. It seems that in every matrilineal system one basic conflict is inherent, namely the conflict between a man's ties to his natal kin on the one hand and to his kin by marriage and procreation on the other. In the Nayar system in this area, the conflict was resolved by almost completely eliminating the claims of the father and his kin. Polyandry and polygyny, combined, minimized the rights of the husband and father, and dispersed their roles between a number of men. This preserved the unity of the lineage, by preventing the close attachment of men to

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

to the mother's husband in their earliest years, there seems no doubt that a great part of their hostility to male elders became focused on the mother's brothers by about the age of five, and that much of it remained conscious. Thus occasional stories are told today of nephews who poisoned or stabbed their mothers' brothers and it is often remarked that kāranavans are "hated" and that "their position is not safe." Such tales of violence are regarded as shocking, but they do not arouse the horror with which a Hindu of the patrilineal castes would receive a story of patricide.

Relationships with the mother's mother's brothers were less intense and rivalrous than with the mother's brothers. Until the age of three or four a small boy might be a playful visitor to the room of the great-uncle who was his kāranavan. Often, this elder died while he was still small, so that the boy retained only affectionate memories of him. Otherwise he learned to behave with even greater formality to this elder than to his mother's brothers. He saw the great-uncle less often, however, and was seldom directly punished by him, so that the relationship tended to remain one of distant geniality.

MAN-SISTER'S DAUGHTER

As the head of her taravād a kāranavan owed his sister's daughter maintenance, shelter, and legal and physical protection. At her tāli rite and during her subsequent marriage relationships, only the sexual rights in a woman were lost to her taravād. All other rights, in her procreative powers and domestic services, remained vested in her taravād, represented by its kāranavan. He could command her obedience in the performance of household and minor agricultural work. He automatically became the full legal guardian of children born to her legitimately. If she seriously infringed the religious laws of her caste, for example, by having sex relations with a man of lower caste, it was his duty to expel her from the taravād and his right (very occasionally exercised) to put her to death by the sword.

In the nineteenth century, when monogamy gradually became customary, a kāranavan arranged the marriage of his sister's daughter. In earlier periods Nayar women seem to have exercised considerable freedom to select or reject their husbands. A woman might not, however, oppose her kāranavan's right to dismiss an unwelcome husband.

All the mother's brothers of a woman had the right to command her domestic services and to discipline her in minor ways. As in the case of a boy, they might play with her until she reached the age of three or four, after which they became somewhat feared authorities. A man might occasionally beat his sister's daughter, until the age of

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

A husband normally visited his wife after eating supper in his natal home, and left before breakfast. Even today in many orthodox Nayar homes men eat regularly in their taravāds and accept food in their wives' homes only on special invitation from their wives' kāranavans. Traditionally a husband placed his weapons outside his wife's door as a sign to other men that he was within. My informants in a Cochin village reported that, within living memory in the late nineteenth century, if two husbands called on the same night the one who came last might sleep outside on the veranda. Usually a woman's regular husbands knew each other and informally agreed upon their turns.

The relationship with the visiting husband was called *sambandham* (Sanskrit, "joining together"). At the start of a girl's first sambandham her husband came to her house privately at night, sometimes with a few friends of his own age. In the presence of the girl's kin he presented her with a white cloth of the kind worn as a skirt. The occasion was not marked by feasting. Later husbands might or might not present the cloth. A transient visitor is said to have left a gold coin beneath the woman's pillow, and a regular husband might do the same on the first night of his union.

While his relationship lasted, a regular husband was expected to make gifts to his wife at the three main festivals of the year. Vishu, in April, was the Malayalam New Year; Onam, in September, was a harvest festival; Tiruvadira, in December, was a women's festival to Kama Devan, the god of passion. The gifts were of bathing oil, bananas, wafer biscuits, and betel leaves and areca nuts for chewing. In some areas a husband also gave a loin cloth of superior quality at Onam. The gifts were prepared by women of the husband's taravād, and he should present them in person to each of his wives on the festival day. If a husband failed to make these gifts it was a tacit sign that he had ended the relationship. It should be noted that the gifts, trivial in value, were gifts of courtship and were in no sense maintenance. Bathing oil is a feminine toilet requisite; wafer biscuits are delicacies served at feasts; and the giving of chewing materials between a man and a woman is everywhere in South India associated with courtship or with the first night of marriage. A husband had no obligation at all to maintain his wife, for she received her food, shelter, and regular clothing from her taravād.

The only other obligations of a husband came at the birth of a child. When a woman became pregnant it was necessary for one or more men of appropriate caste to acknowledge possible biological

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

843 595 431 paternity. This they did by making gifts to the woman herself and to the midwife immediately after the birth. Any man who had visited the woman in the appropriate time period was required to make these gifts. If a man refused, he could be called upon by the caste assembly to fulfill his obligation. The gifts comprised two new lower cloths for the mother and one cloth and a quantity of paddy as payment to the Nayar woman barber who attended at the delivery. Again, these gifts were clearly legal and ceremonial tokens rather than objects of substantial economic value. Legally, however, their transfer was of the utmost significance. For if no man would consent to make the delivery payments, the woman was assumed to have had sex relations with a man of lower caste or with a Muslim or a Christian. Her caste assembly would temporarily excommunicate her taravād until she and her child had been driven out by their kāranavan and the woman's funeral rites had been performed. The woman, presumably with her child, might be executed by her matrilineal kinsmen or allowed to become a slave of the district chief or the king. If the woman and her lover were publicly exposed even before the birth of the child, both might be put to death.

843 595 431 684

595 593 564 A woman had no obligations to her husbands other than the granting of sexual privileges. Nayar husbands of the woman's own caste occasionally dined in her household but this was a favor and not a right. Nayar households sometimes provided uncooked food and a separate building for Brahman or chiefly husbands, but this again seems to have been a matter of courtesy rather than of obligation. Husbands of higher caste made the same gifts to their wives as did Nayar husbands.

[431]

595 584 586 613 [837] [564] In the nineteenth century her kāranavan selected a woman's first husband, and he may have done so at earlier periods. Until the 1930's many kāranavans also retained the right to dismiss a husband who displeased them. It seems improbable, however, that a woman or her kāranavan would ever refuse the visits of a Brahman, chief, or village headman of powerful standing in the community. In some cases also a husband of higher caste seems to have monopolized the favors of a Nayar woman, a privilege not accorded to men of her own caste. K. Kannan Nair reported (1908: 186) that until a century previously local chiefs sometimes compelled a woman to receive as husbands those of her enangar who wished to marry her. In general, however, women seem to have been free to reject particular men, and both men and women to terminate liaisons without formality.

000 In all possible respects attempts seem to have been made to reduce

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
North Kerala Nayar

tween them also permitted the observance of the type of very formal etiquette that existed in the Central kingdoms.

A peculiarity of strict avunculocal residence is that it separates a woman from both her sons and her daughters after they are married. The sons return to their ancestral estates and the daughters leave with their husbands. The relationships of mother and children were therefore less continuous than in Central Kerala. However, various particular arrangements did often permit women to live with some of their children for a great part of their lives. Cross-cousin marriage was one of these. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage was the most popular, because by this means the daughter of a kāranavan and his wife could be brought into their dwelling group as the wife of the kāranavan's nephew. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage was also popular but less common.[1] It was less advantageous unless a shift from the normal residential arrangements could be made. This sometimes occurred when a kāranavan succeeded in arranging a marriage between his son and his sister's daughter. The son might then remain on his father's ancestral estate for part of his life in patrilocal residence. Any property which he developed there would pass to his wife's descendants as matrilineal heirs of the estate. In this way a woman might keep one of her sons living with her for a large part of her life.

Women were also commonly reunited with their sons at divorce or widowhood, for they would then return to their taravāds to live. Whatever the circumstances of residence, moreover, a man should place his duties to mother and sisters above those to wife and children. The ideals of devotion and reverence to matrilineal kinswomen were the same as in Central Kerala. Brother and sister were drawn apart by the normal rules of residence but, like mother and son, came together if the sister were divorced or widowed and returned to her taravād. A woman also returned to her taravād for several months at the time of childbirth, for every child had to be born in its own Taravad.

[1] In the Kottayam village already cited, 12 per cent of Nambiar commoner women who had been married had at some time married their father's own or classificatory sister's son; 8 per cent had married their own or classificatory maternal uncle's son. Cross-cousin marriage is, as everywhere in Kerala, more common among the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and chiefs. Of the women of six village headmen's lineages over a period of five generations, 17 per cent had married their father's own or classificatory sister's son, and 13 per cent their own or classificatory maternal uncle's son. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is thus more usual in North than in Central Kerala. One reason for this is that fathers in North Kerala more commonly educate and endow their sons. By this means a father acquires the right to a voice in arranging his son's marriage, often to the father's niece.

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
North Kerala Nayar

593 will have had different life experiences. One set of siblings may re-
184 ceive property from their father in which their maternal half-siblings
858 have no legal rights. Each set of full siblings will have important
[613] relationships with its own paternal kin. In many respects, therefore, children of the same mother by different fathers have a relationship more comparable to that of the children of two sisters than to that which obtains between full siblings. However, the ties between maternal half-siblings are much stronger than those between paternal half-siblings, who have only a slight relationship. At best, it may be comparable to that between paternal parallel cousins; at worst it may be one of open hostility.

768 A woman's claims on her husband's taravād ceased absolutely with
613 his death. As in Central Kerala, a widow was ceremonially conducted out of her husband's house immediately after the death and could
[764] not enter it thereafter. Husband and wife did not observe death pollu-
[783] tion and did not take part in each other's funeral rites.

591 Hypergamous marriages in aristocratic lineages bore some re-
613 semblance to those in Central Kerala, although they were never
184 polyandrous. Brahman husbands of royal or chiefly women lived matrilocally at the expense of the palace as in Central Kerala. Royal and chiefly men, however, brought their lower-ranking wives to live on their estates in avunculocal residence. The wife and her children occupied a separate house or else a wing of the palace with separate
[783] cooking arrangements. Husband and wife observed rules of ritual pollution as in hypergamous marriages in the Central kingdoms.

THE FATHER AND HIS KIN

855 The kāranavan held ultimate legal control over all his juniors, but
613 their fathers had limited customary rights in and obligations to them.
593 A man was expected to care for his children in his home until they reached puberty or married. Although their own taravād had a legal obligation to maintain them in food and clothing, the father's taravād
[867] customarily supplied their day-to-day needs as a matter of pride. The
[868] father was expected to train his small children in manners and morals, to see that they were taught to write, and to give his sons instruction in cultivation. In return he could ask his children to do small tasks,
593 could exercise domestic discipline while they stayed with him, and
613 could expect kindness and occasional help from them when he was
[584] old. His consent had to be sought for his children's marriages and he
[431] often arranged the marriage of his daughter, although he could not override her kāranavan's wishes. Over and above their customary

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

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184 agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the
[787] marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan, one of which is handed over to the bride's Kâranavan, and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and
[574] the bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the former also receives presents in the shape of money or cloth; and this preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed at all Putamuris in North Malabar, is called 'Putamuri Kurikkal,' but is unknown in South Malabar.

"Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the
[584] celebration of the Putamuri, the bridegroom visits his Kâranavans and elders in caste to obtain formal leave to marry. The
[613] bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the
[564] day appointed the bridegroom proceeds, after sunset, to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house by the bride's party, and is conducted with his friends to seats
[431] provided in the tekkini, or southern hall of the house. There
[574] the bridegroom distributes presents (*dânam*) or money gifts to the Brahmans assembled. After this the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to
[787] appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the *padinhatta* or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths and betel leaves and nuts. The cloths are placed in the western room of the house, called padinhatta, in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion. There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and *Ashtamangaliam*, which consists of eight articles symbolical of *mangaliam* or marriage. These are rice, paddy, the tender leaves of the cocoanut tree, an arrow, a looking glass, a well washed cloth, burning fire, and a small round wooden box called 'cheppu' made in a particular fashion. These will be found placed on the floor of the room aforesaid as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his groom's-man enters the room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloth and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east with the Ashtamangaliam and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groom's-man then hands over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done, the elderly lady who accompanied the bride, sprinkles rice over

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955

AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar
Tiyyar

588 182 564 rank, above the political system of the kingdom, and, in religious belief, the representatives of God on earth. All of these father-figures are collectively physiological fathers of the Nayars, so that in summoning them to deflower their women the Nayars call in real or classificatory fathers as well. When the bridegroom is a higher caste man, moreover (as when Tiyyar barbers call an elder of their caste), his venerable age leaves no doubt of his paternal role.

That the ritual bridegroom should be a father-figure to the community explains my informants' memory that the Asan might deflower Nayar women, but might prefer to forgo his right for money paid by some other bridegroom. It explains why the *desavari* must be present to give permission for the Nayar rite (and the Tandan for the Tiyyar rite) and receive money 'as if to recompense him'. The preliminary gifts by the high-caste Nayar girl's family to Nambûdiri landlords, the *nâduvari* and the Maharaja also bear out this hypothesis.

588 184 182 789 Among South Malabar retainer-Nayars and among Tiyyars a high-caste father-surrogate could not be obtained, so that 'they must perforce supply the priest's place themselves'. The retainer-Nayars get round this by selecting an *enangan* to represent the whole caste, who was deputed for the task by village elders and, supernaturally, by the position of the stars at his birth. Even so, the hazardous nature of the rite is indicated by the need to perform it at an auspicious time, when the astrologer (in some respects another father-figure since, though of lower caste, he was traditionally the trainer of Nayar boys in their village gymnasium, and a priest of Bhagavadi) gave the word.

588 604 184 182 Among North Malabar Tiyyars the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister might tie the *tâli*. She does this on behalf of her son, who is the proper husband for the girl, and before the marriage-pole and the sacred household lamp (divine phallic symbols). In this caste it is fitting that some kinsman or kinswoman of the bridegroom should perform the rite, because Tiyyars are not polyandrous and a girl becomes temporarily incorporated at marriage into her husband's dwelling group. Yet, if we assume the Oedipal fear, the Tiyyar bridegroom could not tie the *tâli* himself, since he is (ideally and often) a cross-cousin. If he is the mother's brother's son, he takes the girl, in this group where paternal claims offset matrilineal, from her *kâranavan* and his own father, a terrifying situation in view of his unconscious Oedipal fears. If he is the father's nephew, he takes her from her father and his own *kâranavan*, an equally dangerous situation. The problem is surmounted by permitting the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister of the girl to 'marry' her on behalf of her son.

564 [588] 305 [759] [582] The substitution of the barber-woman to tie the *tâli*, and the role of the barber as one intimately associated with the girl's passage to womanhood, may perhaps be understood by considering the general role of barbers in Tiyyar social life. The barbers cut hair for Tiyyars, and in South Malabar though not commonly in the north, their women are midwives. They rank parallel to the Tiyyar washerman with whom they are compared, since both castes have polluting occupations but take part in the rites of birth, girls' puberty, and death. In North Malabar Tiyyar men may marry barber women hypergamously, their children being barbers by matrilineal descent. Barbers are thus socially and sometimes physiologically the 'sons' of Tiyyars. They are also likened by the Tiyyars to their younger brothers. Barbers may not give food to Tiyyars but must attend Tiyyar feasts, when they sit on the left or 'younger' side of the feasting hall, the Tiyyars sitting on the right or 'older' side. Barbers address Tiyyar men as 'elder brother', but Tiyyars address older barber men by name, as they do juniors of their own caste. Despite his low rank, however, the barber is in some situations a paternal figure for Tiyyars. He assists the Tandan in his executive functions and may summon Tiyyar offenders to caste justice. An elderly barber is often a marriage-broker for Tiyyars, but he is primarily a priest for Tiyyar household rites. At a Tiyyar death he instructs the heirs to make offerings to the spirit, in the form of a mud image which he makes. On the fourteenth day, he purifies the household by anointing its members with oil

[693] [584] [793] [782] [783]

for young men to go and stay in their wives' houses and visit their own families for business arrangements.

Authority in the family is wielded by the eldest member, who is called *kārnavan*. He has full control of the common property, and manages the income very much as he pleases. He arranges marriages (*sambandhams*) for the boys as well as the girls of the family. He had till lately full power (at least in practice) of alienating anything that belonged to them. His will was undisputed law. This is, perhaps, what is intended to be conveyed by the term *Matri-potestas* in communities of female descent. But it should be remembered that among the Nāyars the autocrat of the family is not the mother, but the mother's brother.

The power of the *Kārnavan* over the family property has always been, in theory, limited, because the property was supposed to belong to every member of the family jointly. Till lately, however, it was practically impossible to limit the *Kārnavan's* power of mortgaging or even fully alienating it, because when it came to litigation the *Kārnavan* always pleaded that such action as he took was necessary for the welfare of the family, and justified himself by basing his arguments "on the discretionary power" vested in him. However, the old theory has lately been asserted in law that a *Kārnavan* can sell or mortgage the property only with the consent of the other members of the family.

All the moneys owing to the family can be paid only through him. He alone can give permission for the use of what belongs to the family. He can punish all the members of the family, either by depriving them temporarily of their allowance, or by prohibiting them to enter the house. In short, he is virtually the head of a tribe rather than the senior member of a family.

The Wife of the Kārnavan.—The wife of the *Kārnavan* has no standing in the family; yet as is but natural, she is supposed to be a dark and sinister force working against the interests of the *Tharawad*. Since she does not belong to the *Tharawad* of her husband she has no interest in its well-being, and it is generally supposed that the *Ammāvi* (the wife of the maternal uncle) is interested only in getting as much out of her husband's family for her own children as her influence over her husband allows. All the tales told to children have as the villain the *Ammāvi*, whose position is not only that of the wife of the maternal uncle, but also the mother-in-law of the brother. She is universally considered to be a sort of sinister step-mother.

But it must be acknowledged that the Nāyar *Kārnavan* loves his sister's children more than his own. The explanation of this apparently unnatural feeling lies in two directions. First, the father is not necessarily of the same caste as the son. Secondly, there is always the possibility of a break in the union. Divorce is not a matter of any difficulty among the Nāyars, both the husband and wife having equal right to announce such a termination of their connection whenever either of the parties desires to do so. This instability of relationship is the principal reason

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

881 she bathes with her friends. The same party return home in procession, when the *Brâhmani* entertains the party with her music. In the afternoon, the girl is seated in a pandal put up in front of the house, where the Vélans continue the songs, which are *Puranic*, and the assembled guests who are chiefly the women of the village as also those of their friends and relatives present the washerman, each with a piece of cloth. They are entertained at a sumptuous feast held that day; after which the assembled party break up, taking leave of the host. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate house on the fourth day for the bath; whence she returns to her house in procession together with the beating of drum and joyous shouts. [184] In the northern parts of the State, the Vélan's songs are at night, and the performance of the ceremony is compulsory on the fourth day. In the southern Taluks it is often put off to a convenient day, before the completion of which, the girl is prohibited from entering into the kitchen or going to the temple for worship.

585 Sambandham. The second or real marriage is the *Sambandham* (the customary union of man and woman), which is the principal word denoting the conjugal relations among the Nayars. It is said that there are seven forms of this marriage prevailing in Malabar, of which only [184] two or three are in vogue in the State. The customs con- [582] nected with each of the latter differ in different places: nevertheless the main features are the same all over. The best form of *Sambandham* among the Nayars is that between the daughter of a maternal uncle and his nephew; but, as a rule they enjoy very much greater freedom of choice than other [584] classes of people. The parents or friends of the bride or bride- [787] groom make the proposal, and the wishes of the *kâranavans* of the two families are invariably consulted after the examination and agreement of their horoscopes. If the parties agree, an auspicious day is fixed in consultation with the astrologer. A few of the caste-men of the village and the friends of the bride-groom meet together in his house, and they all go in a sort of procession to the bride's house where they are properly welcomed and seated in a conspicuous part of the house. A portion of the *Râmâyanam* or other sacred book, referring to marriage and the happy conjugal life attending it, is then read [533] by the Asân or village school master. Some music is also [574] provided for the entertainment of the assembled guests who

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Kammalans

lages. Here again, the informant was unable to give us *tarawad* names, and indeed this was most characteristic of the whole interview. He gave village names instead, saying that they used these now in his caste.

After Konnan had left, their father and their mother's brother got Kunyikai, his elder brother aged sixty two today, and himself married to Kunyu, a young girl fifteen years old at the time, from the Kerikell *tarawad* in Cochin state, resident very close to Lakkidi on the other side of the Ponani river, only about a mile away. That was twenty five years ago, and Kunyu was now forty years old. Very soon, Kunyikai found it impossible to live in this polyandrous atmosphere (Krishnan would give no details), and asked their maternal uncle to get him another wife. Their father had died in the meantime, and their mother's brother was thus the only person who could do this for him. He found Chiru for Kunyikai, and they were wed two years after the former marriage.

All the members of the family never lived together, however, because as soon as the wedding had taken place, Krishnan and the former common wife, took their part of the property (which was not much) and moved to this place near Lakkidi, where they established themselves. They chose it because it was so close to the wife's relatives. All the children they now had were Krishnan's, as Kunyu did not have any for five years after the polyandrous marriage. Krishnan, the eldest boy, now twenty, was born three years after the shift of residence. Kunyikai stayed behind in the family home, and was still there at the time of the interview. He had one boy called Kunju, aged twelve. Of the children of Krishnan and Kunyu, only the second, a daughter called Kalyany, and aged eighteen, was married. She became the wife of two brothers, Raman and Chami, of Ambalapara village, at the age of fifteen. She had one child, a boy called Paru, one year old. The genealogy which I established from this information is given in Table 14.

I was very surprised to find the informant so ignorant of the *tarawad* names – although he did know that of his own *tarawad*. He assured me that village names had now taken their place and that, in his caste, they observed what might be called "village exogamy". Did this mean that the bellmetal smith's patrilineal clans coincided with topographical units such as villages? There was, it seemed to me, a possibility of this being so, although I could get no confirmation of the hypothesis from anybody, not even from my interpreters and guides. The *Musari* observed exogamy also in their *kiriyams*, Krishnan said, although, as in the case of other castes which I have previously described, they only did so for those of the group whom they knew. Inheritance was *makkathayam*,

[TEXT Continues on P. 204]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Thandans

already been to see them twice, and I had become quite well acquainted with them. I had found the two younger men, Panju and Narayana, especially pleasant to talk to and, as they lived in polyandry whereas the rest of the family had given it up, it seemed most appropriate to get to know them better still. Appayl Wattakkeh too, appeared to be one of the few larger and well-to-do Thandan households in the neighbourhood willing to talk about polyandry. I began the special study of this family on the 11th of November, 1949, and went back repeatedly to visit them until my stay in Kerala came to an end in December of the same year.

I have explained earlier (p. 179) how all five brothers of the older generation had been married polyandrously to Devaki; then, when she died, how they had taken Kuniyama to be their new common wife, until Mayadi, the eldest husband, died, Raman became *karanavan* and Shankara broke loose to marry Kodamah, whom his father and mother's brother had found for him. This had seemed to give ideas to the two younger men, Panju and Narayana. Very soon, they too, requested that their maternal uncle provide them with a wife of their own, and they obtained her in the form of Nani, the present thirty five year old mother of their four boys, all born in polyandry.

The interesting thing about these two men was that, although they had not accepted the common wife whom they had previously shared with their elders, they had apparently no objection to polyandry as such, and were quite willing to remain wedded in this way, provided it was limited to them, and to a woman who pleased them both. I was naturally intrigued by this, and did not fail to ask Panju, who became my principal informant (No. 2 in the genealogy, Table 3, facing p. 179), what were his reasons for it. It took a long time to get from him that he was fond of his younger brother and that he had for the latter none of the feelings which he nursed against his elder brothers. Narayana, too, seemed happy with Panju, but there was perhaps more passivity in his case towards his partner than there was in the elder of the two men vis à vis his junior. Why had Nani had accepted the situation was more understandable: born and bred to expect that form of matrimony, she had raised no objection when it had been decided to marry her to the two younger members of the Appayl Wattakkeh household. She was the mistress of her home, too, since her husbands had put themselves up in a smaller house, separate from the rest of the family. She had thus no sister-in-law or mother-in-law to cope with, and seemed very pleased with the arrangement.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 A Wil Kerala A Wil
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Panju and Narayana had taken their share of the two fifths of the common *tarawad* property undivided, as I have explained earlier, and this gave them a relatively more prosperous household in which to live and bring up their children. They were landowners in their own right, and not tenants like most of the Thandans in the area. This enabled them to work in their paddy fields for themselves, and in those of their brothers of the bigger house, and saved them from paying rent or giving part of the crop away to the *janmi* as others had to do.

Accompanied by my interpreters, I spent many hours in the courtyard of the Appayl Wattakkeh farmhouse, watching the work of the men, the domestic chores of the women, and the games of the children. I was obliged occasionally to question them and to press them for answers about situations which I did not have time to watch develop, although I would naturally have much preferred to remain simply a silent onlooker. By preference, I used to go them rather than get them to come to me, for I believed that if I saw them in their own setting, I got to know them better.

It appeared that each time the men of Appayl Wattakkeh had been married (three times in the case of Panju and Narayana, to Devaki, Kuniyama and Nani), there had been the customary arrangement between the two families and a public wedding ceremony. Money had been given to the fathers of the bride by the boy's father and maternal uncle, and cloth to her mother. For Nani, their mother's brother had given her eldest father (she had three) twenty eight *fanans* (or sixteen rupees, fifteen annas), and a piece of cotton material to her mother. In exchange, she had brought with her a dowry which consisted of two hundred rupees worth of jewelry, household brass vessels and two gold sovereigns. This was quite exceptionally good for the Thandan caste, I was told.

In all three marriages, the husbands had lined up with their common bride and drunk coconut milk with her, in the presence of the respective families and their guests. The ceremony had always taken place at the woman's house, and it was only after a few days that she had gone to live with her husbands. This period varied considerably, I heard; in some cases weeks and even months went by without the partners having any sort of marital relations. People were not in a hurry to consummate marriage in Kerala, it seemed.

I had read in Aiyappan's *Iravas and Culture Change*, p. 101, that when one husband was with the common wife, it used to be the custom that he leave his knife etc. on the door frame of the bedroom to signal

13: Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date)
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Travancore. It is a distinctive suffix to the names of Nāyar sons of Travancore Sovereigns. But, in ancient times, this title was conferred on others also, in recognition of merit. Tambis alone proceed in palanquins, and appear before the Mahārāja without a head-dress. The consorts of Mahārājas are selected from these families. If a lady from outside is to be accepted as consort, she is generally adopted into one of these families. The title Karta, or doer, appears also to have been used as a titular name by some of the rulers of Madura. [At the Madras census, 1901, Kartākkal was returned by Balijas claiming to be descendants of the Nāyak kings of Madura and Tanjore.] The Tekkumkur and Vadakkumkur Rājas in Malabar are said to have first conferred the title Karta on certain influential Nāyar families. In social matters the authority of the Karta was supreme, and it was only on important points that higher authorities were called on to intercede. All the Kartas belong to the Illam sub-division of the Nāyar caste. The title Kuruppu, though assumed by other castes than Nāyars, really denotes an ancient section of the Nāyars, charged with various functions. Some were, for instance, instructors in the use of arms, while others were superintendents of maid-servants in the royal household. Writing concerning the Zamorin of Calicut about 1500 A.D., Barbosa states that "the king has a thousand waiting women, to whom he gives regular pay, and they are always at the court to sweep the palaces and houses of the king, and he does this for the State, because fifty would be enough to sweep." When a Mahārāja of Travancore enters into a matrimonial alliance, it is a Kuruppu who has to call out the full title of the royal consort, Panappillai Amma, after the presentation of silk and cloth has been performed. The title Panikkar is derived from pani, work.

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184 the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf,
[787] with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the
[212] celebration of the marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan (palm leaf), one of which is handed over to the bride's Karanavan, and the other
[791] to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the
[574] bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the former also receives presents in the shape of
[431] money or cloth. This preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed at all pudamuris in North Malabar, is called pudamuri kurikkal, but is unknown in South Malabar. Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the pudamuri, the bridegroom visits his Karanavans and elders in caste,
[584] to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house by the bride's party, and conducted with his friends to seats provided in the tekkini
[431] or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom
[574] distributes presents (dānam) or money gifts to the Brāhmans assembled. After this, the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the padinhatta or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths, and betel leaves and nuts. The

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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however, my experience that sambandham was rare on the side of the man before twenty-seven." "The Karanavan," Mr. Rāman Menon writes, "and the women of his household choose the bride, and communicate their choice to the intending bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are informally consulted, and, if they agree, the astrologer is sent for, and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place, two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and, when on the point of leaving, they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have sambandham with . . . . (naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony. The proposal is accepted with pleasure, and the party from the bridegroom's house returns home. Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride, as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for the evening, and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same age as the bridegroom are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M., and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the taravad), areca nuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's household, and which are distributed to the guests. When the bride's house is far away, the bridegroom makes his procession thither from a neighbouring house. Arrived at the bride's house, they sit awhile, and are again